

Ocean Energy Bureau, Interior

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under permit in the OCS, reimbursement for submittal of data and information, and the proprietary terms of data and information submitted to, and retained by, MMS.

§ 251.3 Authority and applicability of this part.

MMS authorizes you to conduct exploration or scientific research activities under this part in accordance with the Act, the regulations in this part, orders of the Director/Regional Director, and other applicable statutes, regulations, and amendments.

(a) This part does not apply to G&G exploration conducted by or on behalf of the lessee on a lease in the OCS. Refer to 30 CFR part 250 if you plan to conduct G&G activities related to oil, gas, or sulphur under terms of a lease.

(b) Federal agencies are exempt from the regulations in this part.

(c) G&G exploration or G&G scientific research related to minerals other than oil, gas, and sulphur is covered by regulations at 30 CFR part 280.

§ 251.4 Types of G&G activities that require permits or Notices.

(a) *Exploration.* You must have an MMS-approved permit to conduct G&G exploration, including deep stratigraphic tests, for oil, gas, or sulphur resources. If you conduct both geological and geophysical exploration, you must have a separate permit for each.

(b) *Scientific research.* You may only conduct G&G scientific research related to oil, gas, and sulphur in the OCS after you obtain an MMS-approved permit or file a Notice.

(1) *Permit.* You must obtain a permit if the research activities you propose to conduct involve:

- (i) Using solid or liquid explosives;
- (ii) Drilling a deep stratigraphic test; or
- (iii) Developing data and information for proprietary use or sale.

(2) *Notice.* Any other G&G scientific research that you conduct related to oil, gas, and sulphur in the OCS requires you to file a Notice with the Regional Director at least 30 days before you begin. If circumstances preclude a 30-day Notice, you must provide oral notification and followup in writing.

You must also inform MMS in writing when you conclude your work.

§ 251.5 Applying for permits or filing Notices.

(a) *Permits.* You must submit a signed original and three copies of the MMS permit application form (Form MMS-327). The form includes names of persons; the type, location, purpose, and dates of activity; and environmental and other information. A nonrefundable service fee of \$2,012 must be paid electronically through *Pay.gov* at: <https://www.pay.gov/paygov/>, and you must include a copy of the *Pay.gov* confirmation receipt page with your application.

(b) *Disapproval of permit application.* If MMS disapproves your application for a permit, the Regional Director will state the reasons for the denial and will advise you of the changes needed to obtain approval.

(c) *Notices.* You must sign and date a Notice and state:

- (1) The name(s) of the person(s) who will conduct the proposed research;
- (2) The name(s) of any other person(s) participating in the proposed research, including the sponsor;
- (3) The type of research and a brief description of how you will conduct it;
- (4) The location in the OCS, indicated on a map, plat, or chart, where you will conduct research;
- (5) The proposed dates you project for your research activity to start and end;
- (6) The name, registry number, registered owner, and port of registry of vessels used in the operation;
- (7) The earliest practicable time you expect to make the data and information resulting from your research activity available to the public;
- (8) Your plan of how you will make the data and information you collected available to the public;
- (9) That you and others involved will not sell or withhold for exclusive use the data and information resulting from your research; and
- (10) At your option, you may submit (as a substitute for the material required in paragraphs (c)(7), (c)(8), and (c)(9) of this section) the nonexclusive use agreement for scientific research attachment to Form 327.

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(d) *Filing locations.* You must apply for a permit or file a Notice at one of the following locations:

(1) For the OCS off the State of Alaska—the Regional Supervisor for Resource Evaluation, Minerals Management Service, Alaska OCS Region, 949 East 36th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99508–4302.

(2) For the OCS off the Atlantic Coast and in the Gulf of Mexico—the Regional Supervisor for Resource Evaluation, Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394.

(3) For the OCS off the coast of the States of California, Oregon, Washington, or Hawaii—the Regional Supervisor for Resource Evaluation, Minerals Management Service, Pacific OCS Region, 770 Paseo Camarillo, Camarillo, California 93010–6064.

[62 FR 67284, Dec. 24, 1997, as amended at 71 FR 40913, July 19, 2006; 73 FR 49948, Aug. 25, 2008]

§ 251.6 Obligations and rights under a permit or a Notice.

While conducting G&G exploration or scientific research activities under MMS permit or Notice:

(a) You must not:

(1) Interfere with or endanger operations under any lease, right-of-way, easement, right-of-use, Notice, or permit issued or maintained under the Act;

(2) Cause harm or damage to life (including fish and other aquatic life), property, or to the marine, coastal, or human environment;

(3) Cause harm or damage to any mineral resource (in areas leased or not leased);

(4) Cause pollution;

(5) Disturb archaeological resources;

(6) Create hazardous or unsafe conditions; or

(7) Unreasonably interfere with or cause harm to other uses of the area.

(b) You must immediately report to the Regional Director if you:

(1) Detect hydrocarbon occurrences;

(2) Detect environmental hazards which imminently threaten life and property; or

(3) Adversely affect the environment, aquatic life, archaeological resources,

or other uses of the area where you are conducting exploration or scientific research activities.

(c) You must also consult and coordinate your G&G activities with other users of the area for navigation and safety purposes.

(d) Any persons conducting shallow test drilling or deep stratigraphic test drilling activities under a permit must use the best available and safest technologies that the Regional Director determines to be economically feasible.

(e) You may not claim any oil, gas, sulphur, or other minerals you discover while conducting operations under a permit or Notice.

§ 251.7 Test drilling activities under a permit.

(a) *Shallow test drilling.* Before you begin shallow test drilling under a permit, the Regional Director may require you to:

(1) Gather and submit seismic, bathymetric, sidescan sonar, magnetometer, or other geophysical data and information to determine shallow structural detail across and in the vicinity of the proposed test.

(2) Submit information for coastal zone consistency certification according to paragraphs (b)(3) and (b)(4) of this section, and for protecting archaeological resources according to paragraph (b)(5) of this section.

(3) Allow all interested parties the opportunity to participate in the shallow test according to paragraph (c) of this section, and meet bonding requirements according to paragraph (d) of this section.

(b) *Deep stratigraphic tests.* You must submit to the appropriate Regional Director, at the address in § 251.5(d), a drilling plan, an environmental report, an Application for Permit to Drill (Form MMS–123), and a Supplemental APD Information Sheet (Form MMS–123S) as follows:

(1) *Drilling plan.* The drilling plan must include:

(i) The proposed type, sequence, and timetable of drilling activities;

(ii) A description of your drilling rig, indicating the important features with special attention to safety, pollution prevention, oil-spill containment and